

BLUE GRASS BLADE

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DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGANDA OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

Life's Journey Through Evolution

(By Mrs. J. J. Fykes.)

From shape to shape (by Nature's plan)
Life hurried—with the cell began,
And ended in the complex man.

From simple plastic cell—a small,
Weak drop of plasm, she did call
Through Time's eternity—Life's all.

The protoplasm changed anon
Into the nobler moneron,
When this earth's youth had scarce begun.

Then strange gelatinous forms, arrayed
In beauteous hues, Life spawned and bade
The wan waves nourish what she made.

And next the jelly, grown compact,
Assumed protections it had lacked,
Within a shell's bright pearl lay packed.

The gray seas teemed with a grotesque
And horrid consciousness,—the breast
Of earth lulled nightmare forms to rest.

For Life, experimenting still,
Brought forth huge forms to roam at will—
Fierce hearts, small brains and fangs that kill.

Evolved the eye, ear, nerve and brain,
The foot, fin, wing, and from the main
Called shapes to tenant hill and plain.

For life within the ocean's lap
Found origin. With honeyed sap,
Rare plants she filled, and hairy nap

Gave to their leaves and climbing stems,
And furnished flower-diadems,
Whose satin petals glowed like gems.

Then velvet-bodied insects she
Evolved, and through her wizardry
Caused many varied forms to be.

The venomous and sluggish snake,
The feathered songsters of the brake,
The frog who keeps the moon awake.

High and Ashland East Side
Sepo
A J Parker
erve and vein,
The down, heart, and brain
Behind the frail shell's thin membrane.

Then crowned the work she had begun
In earth's dim infaney, and on
Sped to her goal,—her work well done.

For man arose, who upright stands,
The ruler of all seas and lands,—
A reasoning mind and shaping hands.

She formed him when a younger sun
For earth its gown of radiance spun,—
Formed sinew, vein and ganglion.

But slowly did her work progress;
The long years carried to success
Her plan—weaned man from brutishness.

Evolved in him the mind's white light,
Gemmed with rare stars the troubled night
Of fear—removed its cankering blight.

True, slowly but the heights he won,
But loyal reason urged him on
Till he scaled stars and weighed the sun.

Life sees in him her noblest born,
Whom all her gifts of grace adorn,
Who to Truth's service has been sworn.

Not god-made he, but shaped to crown
Creation,—moving up, not down,—
Not born in sin, but for renown.

Born to all possibilities;
To stand, not live upon his knees
And placate goblin enemies.

No talking snake, transgressing Eve
Forever may our souls deceive,
Nor may priest's pompous word: "Believe!"

Believe! Aye, in our heritage—
In progress—not in Jehovah's rage,
Or in a book's inspired page.

Believe!—in Nature's promise grand,
The vast capacities at hand,
But not in Hell as priests command.

So shall we learn and understand.

San Francisco, Calif.

The Doctrine of Immortality

Neither Proof or Hope—An Appalling Belief—Christian
Conduct Disprove the Most Ardent Claims—
Annihilation Alone Brings Rest.

(By Josephine K. Henry.)

"From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be,
That no life lives forever,
That dead men rise up never,
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea."

—Swinburne.

The doctrine of immortality in the chief cornerstone of the Christian religion. Without it creeds, dogmas, saviors, and schemes of salvation, and the clergy, whose chief duty is to groom humanity for eternal life, would be entirely useless.

The average Christian says, "I cannot see what is the object of life, unless man is immortal. I cannot see how any one can be happy who does not believe in a future life." This is asserted by Christians in fear of the fact that the most devout believers in immortality are not happy, and make most strenuous efforts to hold on to this mortal life, and only enter upon immortality when they must, and when death comes Christians resign their loved ones to immortality with tears, fears, wailing dirges, and all the insignia of woe.

Paul declared he would be the most miserable of man without the belief in a future life. Bitter experiences in this life prompted Paul's groan, just as they have planted in the human mind the hope of a system of relief and rewards. The shallow pessimism which we thought the excuse of hardship or prosecution talks lightly of suicide if immortality be a dream, undervalues the most unselfish, heroic and enduring forms of human endeavor, which are the levers of the world's progress, and looks upon virtue as a worthless investment, unless it brings in a never-ceasing cent per cent.

Our estimate of the value and purpose of life must be of life on this particular planet, since we have no knowledge of any other. To judge it by the light of a hypothetical future is to admit that the present life is a failure—an unpleasant reflection for those who believe the world to be under the guidance of an overruling providence. Is it not beyond human knowledge to prove that the purpose for which we were born can be fulfilled only after death?

There is a sweeping assertion made, and generally be-

lieved, that all human beings "have a horror of annihilation." This assertion is made by those who have not had many opportunities to learn the facts, or availed themselves of those they had.

The Society of Psychical Research constantly sends out circular letters asking all classes of people "if they desire life beyond the grave." The number of emphatic negative replies prove conclusively that a horror of annihilation is not general. All human beings hail sleep as their greatest blessing, yet sound and dreamless sleep is virtual annihilation as long as it lasts. If this sleep should last a million years, or through eternity, the sleeper could be no worse off. The most delightful moment of the twenty-four hours of each day of mortal life, is when sleep, blessed sleep "tired Nature's sweet restorer" woe us to profound unconsciousness that shuts out, for the time, the struggles, sighs, sufferings, disappointments, cares, and responsibilities of this weary old world and launches us virtually into annihilation.

There are minds sufficiently logical to accept the idea of annihilation as far preferable, to the eternal duties and imaginary delights, of the the various heavens held out as rewards by the religious of the world. There is not the slightest proof that immortality is a fact, and there is not the slightest proof that immortality is not a fact. The great offending of the immortal Ingersoll, was that he honestly said that "he did not know whether, or not, there was another life after this one. For this he was persecuted and maligned, and will never be forgiven by Christians, whose religion teaches "forgive your enemies."

Are our Christian friends dead-sure they know?

Is it not a fact that the opinions of the Pope of Rome, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and all the Doctors of Divinity, who claim they are able to pilot saved souls to immortal life, are of no more value on this unsolvable question, than the opinion of the most unlettered and mystified questioner? What this life is in the here and now is mystery, what lies beyond this strange existence we call, is profound mystery, which no religion or system of theology can solve. If we live after this life it is a fact in Nature. If we lose our personality, and are cast into the crucible of this wonderful cosmos, that is a fact in nature, which no belief or unbelief can affect. Is the fear of not living forever, more sad than that of not having existed always? Is any human being grieving today because he was not in existence when America was discovered? Need we grieve because we shall not be in existence the centuries hence? Would we rather live this mortal life forever, than cease to be? It can be seriously doubted whether the belief in immortality has a salutary effect on the human race.

If immortality is a fact, every moment of our brief span of mortal life should be entirely devoted to preparation for immortality. Certainly nine-tenths of the people who believe in personal immortality, fail to lead lives that will secure the rewards promised. The fact that human beings are driven to devote all their time and energy to supply the strenuously pressing needs of this life is strongly suggestive of the idea that this life is not a preparatory one, but one complete in itself.

The death notices of Christians are now prefixed with the words "Fell asleep," "Entered into eternal rest." These expressions certainly give no hint of the activities descriptive of the Christian heaven. Profound sleep and eternal rest are not suggestive of playing harps, waving palms, and singing praises before the "Great White Throne forevermore," but strongly suggestive of annihilation. To the writer of this the idea of everlasting personal existence, is the most appalling one ever offered to the human mind for acceptance; yet without an iota of proof to support it, it is accepted by many as a fact. But we should remember that nothing in the constitution of the universe guarantees humanity against disappointment and illusion. The Old Testament is dead silent on the dogma of immortality. Solomon, claimed as the wisest man of the Christian system, says in Ecclesiastics 3-19, "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; as the one dieth, so dieth the other. All have one breath, all go into one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" and the Bible further says, "Blessed are the dead, for they rest from

their labors, and their works do follow them." What grander immortality could be desired than that our works, our thoughts, and our aspirations should live in the lives of those that follow us?

If Solomon is an authority, if he means what he says, and says what he means, immortality is a more pipe dream of diseased imagination. But Solomon with all his wisdom knew nothing more of the profound mystery than we of today know. Annihilation is perfect rest, painlessness, freedom from all impressions that rack and torment the corporal or mental being, and ardently desired by the writer after the completion of a normal life, and upon the appearance of the unavoidable infirmities of old age. There can be no pain in annihilation any more than in the repose of sleep, blessed sleep, that brings forgetfulness of every pain and sorrow, release from every dread and danger. Is not the plow boy fast asleep more to be envied than the prince wide awake?

Eternal rest and profound peace is the creed of the Church of Annihilation, and how many long for these in this weary old world where there is one who laughs, there are a million who sigh.

The prospect of proving the doctrine of immortality is not encouraging, and if correct data could be obtained on this question, we predict that an astonishingly large number of the most intelligent persons are firm and consistent in the belief that Death is an eternal rest.

Versailles, Kentucky.

Persistence of Superstition

High Tribute Due the Race for Its Successful Fight Against Superstition's Hosts and Heartless Gods.

(By Dr. T. Bowles)

The progress which good men and women are now making in driving from the brains of their fellowmen the awful superstitions that have so long cursed the world is truly marvelous, and at the same rate of progress now going on it will require only a few more decades until all civilized peoples will rejoice in their complete deliverance from the tyranny of these heartless monsters. It is a high honor for any man or any woman to assist in this glorious work, and long ages after we have gone the happy children of the centuries yet to come will sing our praises and call us blessed.

If it was in my power to place before the civilized world a panorama of the hundreds of millions of fathers, mothers, children, oxen, lambs, and birds that have

been tortured and killed by the priests of superstition to satisfy and pacify their blood-thirsty God, I could bid farewell to earth rejoicing in the happy knowledge that never again would one of my fellowmen be found on his knees worshipping at the altars of these hideous creatures.

This panorama, if it could be seen by all the inhabitants of the earth, would instantly sweep from the brain of every civilized human being every vestige of superstition, and if it were possible for inanimate things to weep, the very flag-stones on which we walk would sweat great drops of blood.

One of the ancient gods created monstrous beings called furies; the hair on their heads was composed of venomous serpents, and around their waists grew girdles of deadly vipers, but this panorama would terrify and horrify every human being infinitely worse than swarms of Furies in every home.

Unfortunately this panorama cannot be

placed on the stage for the immediate cure of superstition, and it remains for the brave men and fearless women of all lands to finish the work so nobly begun by the immortal heroes and heroines of history.

Not long ago the Aryan family of people to which we belong filled every nook and corner of the universe with thousands of terrible Gods and malicious devils, but the beautiful Angel of Science and the lovely Goddess of Reason have banished nearly all these phantoms from the earth and sky, and now the idiotic devotees of superstition have only the pitifully small number of three Gods and one devil left to comfort and console them.

The same fate awaits the Gods and devil that still survive, and in due time the brave army of grand men and noble women who are now at work armed with the battle-axe of love and reason, will drive from the brains of all civilized men both Jehovah and his lieutenant, the devil, and when this happy day arrives our beautiful earth

will become a more lovely home for all the children of men than the fabled Garden of Eden.

Every thing that lives has its enemies and has to struggle for its existence; if it conquers its enemies it demonstrates its right to life, but if it fails in the struggle it is a certain proof that it will and should perish miserably from the earth, and judged by this infallible test the highest tribute that can be paid to the human race is its successful fight against the priests of superstition, and the heartless Gods and devils in the earth and sky.

When we think of the intellectual food upon which the human race has fed for hundreds of thousands of years, we wonder how man ever ascended from savagery to civilization. Nearly all his mental pabulum has been plucked from the deadly Upas tree of superstition, and one of these choice intellectual dishes that he has been forced to swallow for thousands of years is the absurd and idiotic superstition that there has been four terrible and bloody wars in heaven, between the Gods and their children.

These wars are all equally well authenticated, for the history of all of them are found in the sacred oracles, Holy Books, and divine revelations, written by the priests of superstition for the information of the human race.

The first of these wars occurred when Uranos was the supreme ruler of the universe, and after a long and desperate conflict, great slaughter, and the loss of many lives, this supreme ruler of the world was finally murdered by one of his sons, who was crowned King of the World.

The reign of Kronos was peaceful and successful for a few thousand years, but he finally failed to live peaceably with his children, and a second war occurred which, like the first, terminated in dethroning the reigning God, and one of his sons, Zeus, seized his father's scepter, and took charge of the affairs of the universe, and for a few thousand years his reign was undisputed and undisturbed; but in due time some of his distant kinsfolk declared war against him, and this third war in heaven was far more terrible and sanguinary than either of the preceding wars, for Zeus was a mighty warrior, and by his extraordinary skill and strength in using mountains and thunderbolts as weapons, he maintained his title and tenure to the throne, and the rebels were subdued and cast into deep chasms of the earth and buried out of sight under mountains hurled against them by the puissant arm of the mighty Zeus.

The reign of Zeus continued for a few thousand years and he was succeeded on the throne of the universe by the present reigning God, Jehovah, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, and under the joint reign

of these three Gods the fourth and last war in heaven occurred.

In parentheses it will be proper to state that the three Gods who preceded Jehovah on the throne of the universe were all married, and they each married their sisters, and besides their wives, Kronos and Zeus kept numerous concubines, and by these wives and concubines they raised a vast multitude of children, all of whom were demi-gods and heroes; but we have no account in any of the oracles, Holy Books nor divine revelations that Jehovah was married, but the Holy Ghost, who was his partner in business, had a very serious entanglement and disreputable liaison with a carpenter's affianced bride in Palestine.

But we must return from this digression to the fourth and last war in heaven, which was infinitely more disastrous to the human family than any of the previous wars. When Jehovah ascended the throne of the universe it is not unreasonable to suppose that he came to the conclusion that the chief cause of the terrible wars in heaven that had occurred during the lives of his predecessors were due to the fact that their children were made of flesh and blood and subject to the infirmities of the flesh; and in order to avoid this possible danger he created a vast multitude of children without flesh or blood or passions, called angels, and turned them loose in heaven. When we reflect that these angels were not made out of any substance, and that they were wholly immaterial and incorporeal, it is impossible for a person whose mind is not perverted by superstition to understand what possible use that they could make of wings, and yet we are informed that some of them had three pairs, and all of them had one pair attached to the points of their shoulders. The duty assigned to these angels was to execute the will of Jehovah in the government of the world; they were his ambassadors, and through them he often appeared to men; they surrounded the throne of Jehovah, praising his great name, and some of them were constantly receiving his commands and flying away to execute his orders. The great prince among this vast multitude of angels was one named Michael, and he had three pair of wings, and in this connection it is proper to state that Jehovah, for some reason never revealed to man, decided not to have any female angels in heaven; these angels were all pure and sinless; they had no flesh or blood, and consequently they had no passions; they had nothing in the world to tempt them, and to a mind not entirely perverted by superstition, it is utterly impossible to imagine why the infinitely wise and the infinitely good Jehovah failed to live in peace with this family of angels, created by himself for the express purpose of executing his will and

attending to all the wants of the Trinity.

In the whole history of the universe none of the gods who have occupied the throne ever commenced their reign under such favorable auspices as the present ruler, and the students of celestial history will never cease to wonder why Jehovah sowed the seeds of discord in this happy family and transformed one of these beautiful and sinless angels into a devil, who from that day to this has been constantly engaged in wrecking the hopes and happiness of all the children of men.

About one-third of the angels volunteered under the standard of the devil, and the other two-thirds volunteered under the standard of Michael, and the whole universe rocked and reeled and trembled while the conflict raged between these terrible celestial armies; but by reason of superior numbers, Michael's army finally prevailed, and the devil and his angels were cast out of heaven and given permission to corrupt the whole human family and to plunge the vast majority of them into an everlasting hell of fire and brimstone prepared for the devil and his angels.

Many thrilling incidents connected with this last war in heaven would deeply interest the reader, but space forbids, and I close this chapter by asking every reader of these pages if you are ready to abandon the awful superstition that God created the devil for the express purpose of corrupting and misleading his poor children on earth and finally burning their souls in an eternal hell?

How long! O, how long, will it yet be before the pure minds of innocent children will cease to be corrupted with the infamous falsehoods impressed upon their brains by the heartless priests of superstition.

Muncie, Ind.

MATERIALIST ASSOCIATION.

The San Francisco Materialist Association is giving educational lectures every Friday at 8 p. m., at Auditorium Annex, Page and Filmore Streets. Admission Free.

Program for October.

OCT. 1. President Elliott's New Religion by Wm. McDevitt, LL. M.

OCT. 8. History of the Free Thought Movement in England by Fred Stanley.

OCT. 15. Modern Patriotism by Attorney E. E. Kirk, Past Vice-Commander-in-Chief United Spanish War Veterans.

OCT. 22. Mysticism and Democracy by Prof. H. A. Overstreet, Department of Philosophy, State University.

OCT. 29. Religious Beliefs of the American Indians by Geo. B. Benham, Attorney at Law.

Materialism and New Thought

Matter and Mind.—How Ideals and Character Are Formed.—Thought Waves From a Million Brains.

(By W. C. Cope.)

"What is mind?—No matter!" What is matter?—Never mind!" was the old metaphysical quibble we boys used to delight in at college. It was a definition that was pleasing alike to the Idealist and the Materialist in its ambiguity.

Since Bishop Berkeley in the 17th century "destroyed this world in two volumes octavo," as Sidney Smith puts it, the doctrine of Idealism has had numerous advocates. This doctrine, the largest number of its adherents today being the Christian Scientists, is that we are concerned only with ideas and are ignorant of everything else. Idealists argue that what our senses convey to us is not evidence of an external world, but only of our sensation. Further, we are utterly ignorant and must ever remain so of matter itself, and that it is easier to conceive that God directly causes our sensations than that they are conceived to us through the unknown world of matter.

Materialists aver on the other hand that little as we know about matter in its essence, we are conscious of its existence and that we cannot go back of consciousness. Our eyes, it is true, are only sensitive mirrors connected with nerves, which convey the impressions received by the eyes of the brain, the same being true of all the organs of sensation. But when the five senses all agree in conveying to consciousness a co-ordinate impression, the evidence is about as complete as anything can be. Take a pot of coffee, for example: The eyes see it, the nose smells it, the ear hears it boiling, the hand touches it, and the tongue tastes it. If this is not sufficient evidence, we can call in any number of persons and their consciousness will give the same report. So the Materialist claims that the fact of the material existence of the pot of coffee is certain. And as a further step in the same direction, he claims that we really know nothing outside of matter and force, the latter being exerted only by matter. Thus, thought is a force exerted by the brain and has the power to influence other brains in proportion to its strength and the resistance offered by the other brains. And if thought finds its analogy in electric force, the subtlety of which it so closely resembles, the brain is a material body that has many of the qualities of the electric battery, though possessing many other qualities

which no artificial electric battery possesses.

As a Materialist, I believe that human beings are the sum-total of their heredity plus their environment. Heredity explains those family traits which Theosophists accept as proving reincarnation, while environment accounts for the differentiation of the individual from any of his ancestors. "I am a part of all that I have met," Tennyson says. The thought waves sent out by a million brains acting upon the natural bent received through heredity form the ideals and the character of each human being. There is no such thing as freedom of the will in that large sense in which most new thought advocates accept it, and yet I think there is no real antagonism between Materialism and new thought.

To explain my position, let me quote from Thomas Hobbes, who was the greatest metaphysician of his time, and whose language Macaulay characterizes as more luminous and precise than has ever been employed by any other metaphysical writer:

"The question is not whether man is a free agent, that is to say, whether he can write or forbear; speak or be silent, according to his will; but whether the will to write or will to forbear come upon him according to his will, or according to anything else in his own power. I acknowledge this liberty that I can do if I will; but to say I can will if I will, I take to be an absurd speech. It is true that very few have learned from their teachers that man is not free to will; nor do they find it much in books. What they find in books, that which the poets chant in the theaters, and the shepherds on the mountains, that which the pastors teach in the churches, and the doctors in the universities, and that which the common people in the markets and all mankind in the whole world do assent unto, is the same that I assent unto—namely, that a man hath freedom to do if he will; but whether he hath freedom to will is a question it seems they have never thought upon. A wooden top that is lashed by the boys and runs about, sometimes to one wall, sometimes to another, sometimes spinning, sometimes hitting men on the shins, if it were sensible of its own motion, would think it proceeded from its own will, unless it felt what lashed it. And is a man any wiser when he runs to one place for a benefice, to another for a bargain, and troubles the world with writing errors and requiring answers because he thinks he does it without other cause than his

own will, and seeth not the lashings that cause that will?"

Now the question is, whence come these "lashings", spoken of by Hobbes, that cause us to will to do or will not to do certain acts? They come both from within and from without, from heredity and from environment. Heredity gives us those urges and natural bents that all are conscious of possessing, which accentuated by environment—by teaching, thought, reading, and conversation, becomes our ideals that govern our conduct by influencing our will.

Environment is only another name for our everyday surroundings. Anything that makes an impression upon us is part of our environment. If you live in the country, the trees, the birds, the grass, the sky outside, down to the old kitchen stove inside the house is part of your environment. If you are a Spiritualist and believe that you receive messages from a little Indian girl, "Sunflower," or from "Little Bright Eyes," whether they exist outside your imagination or not does not matter—they are part of your environment and their imaginary messages influence your will. A pair of tumble-bugs I watched working together last summer were part of my environment, as they gave me new ideas of co-operation and harmony, and influenced my will through accentuating my brotherhood ideal.

So the new thought ideal is not antagonistic to the Materialistic belief. New thought teaches that by dwelling on one's ideals one may in a large measure realize them. Is success your ideal? Then new thought teaches you that by dwelling upon the thought of success you achieve success. The intensity of the thought lashes the will to resolve. But the suggestion to dwell upon the thought of success comes from without—from your environment—and reacts upon your instinctive desire for success—success meaning to you that you shall be able to live well, have what you desire, and possess the approbation of your fellow-men, so influencing your will to do the things that produce success.

Many a man of ability has failed to achieve success through want of concentration upon it. New thought teaches him to concentrate. The suggestion from without given through the new thought book or teacher influences his will. He concentrates upon success with the result that he achieves it. Rightly he gives the credit to new thought which pointed out a road he was earnestly seeking. But it was not the Invincible Will, but the Invincible Ideal influencing his will that produced the result he desired. "Men," says Herbert Spencer, "are rational beings in but a very limited sense. Conduct results from desire, to the gratification of which reason serves but as a guide."

Open Letter to a Preacher

Blade Writer Takes Issue with a Sky-Pilot Who Allowed Prejudice to Run Away with Judgment.

(By A. A. Snow.)

"Lineville, Iowa,

"Rev. C. R. Powell, Little Rock, Ark.: Dear Sir: I have read your debate with Col. Dick Maple, where in you affirm that "Socialism is the twin sister of Infidelity hatched in the pit." While I can agree with you that Socialism is a sort of a will-o'-the-wisp, or "New Jerusalem," of whose golden streets no foot has ever trod, or of whose walls of jasper no eye hath ever seen, or ever will see that we have any evidence of; yet I think your affirmation was unfair, unjust, and untrue, being born of prejudice. It casts an undue reflection against the characters of both the founders of Socialism and the Freethinkers of the world.

Now there is no reflection cast by denominating Socialism Infidelity, unless the expression was intended as a reflection. Jesus himself was an Infidel to the existing order of things of his day. But when the expression is coupled with the phrase, "born in the pit" (hell), it cannot but cast a terrible reflection on the characters of the founders of the theory of Socialism.

A company conceives of a scheme of redeeming our western arid regions; with their plans they expect to make the desert blossom as the rose. But their plans prove inadequate for the undertaking and so result in failure. But withal might they not be sincere and honest men? Would their failure prove that their scheme was hatched in some pit where all was crime and depravity?—where sincerity and honor were unknown? I believe both the founders and votaries of Socialism are, at least, as sincere and honorable as those of Christianity.

But I need not speak in behalf of Socialism, as it has had its representative in the person of Col. Dick Maple. I speak in behalf of the Freethinkers of the world, whom you denominate Infidels. I ask that they may have their day in court. I deny your assertion that "Infidelity was born in the pit"—that is, any pit of crime and depravity. Are you willing to defend your assertion as against the Freethinker? If you will arrange to write six or a dozen articles to the Arkansas Baptist in defense of your assertion, I will reply to them provided you allow me as many words to each article as you take. Or if you wish me to affirm, as I see you state that Infidelity has done nothing, I will affirm that "The principles of Infidelity have done more for

the advancement of humanity than have those peculiar to Christianity." Terms to be used as you defined them in your debate with Maple.

It is no uncommon thing for ministers to speak of Infidels or Infidelity in the most reproachful manner, and then prejudice the people against hearing the Infidel's defense. But I think charity should be extended them on the ground that their Bible so inspires them, but I am dead certain of one thing, and that is that they and their book cannot both be so excused and its infallibility still maintained. I defy the whole Christian world to prove that the Christian is one whit more sincere and honest in his belief than the Infidel is.

Lineville, Iowa.

THE GIVING OF THANKS.

What Reason Have Believers For Talking to Food Before Eating?

(By E. B. Tanner.)

I would like to have our Christian friends give a good, plausible reason for asking a blessing, or giving thanks for every meal that is set before them.

They say a personal god has placed us here. If that is true, it seems to me that we are entitled to all we can get to sustain an existence that we are not accountable for. It almost makes me snicker right out in meetin' when compelled to listen to a mockery of this kind, and I believe no sensible reason can be given for these mummeries, either before or after meals. Why wouldn't it be just as well, besides saving time and labor, to give thanks a year in advance, and be done with it? Like the man who got sick and tired of praying every night, so he wrote a prayer and pasted it on the footboard of his bed, and when ready to jump in, pointed at the prayer, saying: "O, Lord, those are my sentiments." Many Universalist and Unitarian preachers neglect these ceremonies while at home with their families, but while away on a vacation visiting among friends, they are compelled to wear the yoke, no matter how much it galls.

Blessings are something given to us, and if the Lord sends material to feed us, it might be proper to return thanks for favors received, but when I earn my dinner before I eat it, I don't consider that I am under any obligations except to those who prepared it for me. Dinners come by work or gift, and never by the prayer plan.

We are told that the Lord causes the

earth to bring forth sustenance that we may live. In that case, it may be proper and right to give partial thanks—one-half to the giver, and the other half to the one who does the work, except where the production is spontaneous. It is said that the Lord helps those who help themselves, and that is through human hands, not heavenly.

I recently saw a party of Infidels seated around a dinner table trying to look sanctimonious, and with bowed heads listening to a preacher giving thanks! I thought to myself, "O. Consistency, thou art indeed a jewel."

Attica, O.

APOPHTEGMS OF A DISBELIEVER.

(By Dr. Henry Fuehrer)

I would not believe in the Mosaic creation fable if it were written on the sky; for I would then know that it could not have been done by supernatural, but by natural means; for sight is a natural (physical) sense, and we already have the whole sub-department of physics dealing with it—optics.

Supernatural phenomena can be observed by supernatural beings only, and man is a natural entity, hence nothing supernatural can be revealed to him or observed by him. A human being cannot hear a supernatural entity speak, for speaking is a natural function of the organs of speech, and a supernatural entity, not having these natural lalic vessels, cannot perform the functions of lalia; and if the supernatural entity DOES speak, it must be a supernatural mode of speech and natural man cannot hear it.

Natural man with his natural organs of speech can only hear with his natural auditory canal natural speech, but not supernatural speech.

Supernatural action can imply supernatural reflex only, and natural action can imply natural reflex action only,—hence a supernatural entity cannot speak and natural homo could not bear it, if it did. Hence, when the Bible says: "And Jehovah spoke to Moses," etc., it is uttering an ignorance of natural phenomena, of cosmology, optics, physics, anatomy, Physiology,—yea, even the rudimentary elements of philosophy and logic.

"Quod erat demonstrandum," and "God spoke to Moses," is a contradictio in verbo.

ST. LOUIS, MO.—I hereby acknowledge the receipt of an issue of the Blade of last week; also the hearty invitation it has extended to all who wish to attend the Convention in November. I certainly will attend the meeting, if nothing serious happens to interfere. Yours very truly.—MRS. R. POPE.

The Fair-i-See and the Sad-u-See

(By John F. Clark.)

The Pharisee (phonetic for fair-I-see) was the real know-it-all and better-than-thou fellow. The Pharisee was short the price

of a pint at the Publican and Sinners Ranch and the credit side of the slate was turned to the wall. He could interpret Moses and the minor prophets in seven different and divergent ways, but could not interpolate a witness into his throat without spot cash. Caesar's phiz upon a silver or copper disk stood between him and the loving cup: i. e. the want of. So he hung his shamed head upon his proud bosom and lamented with a loud lamentation. A fellow came along and took pity upon him, but as the pity cloud had no silver lining, the Pharisee scorned the sympathetic offer, which stimulateth not except it inebriateth. The man said: "Brother, I am sad-u-see to see you in such melancholy straits." "Have you five Lincoln pennies with the Godly trust for a beer upon your person?" "No, brother, I changed my raiment before ambling from my humble home and forgot me to shift the filthy lucre from the house garment to the street ephod. You see I was so much enamored of the beautiful morn and the sweet-scented hay that I thought me not of the lucre, but of my sympathy draw in abundance."

"Thanks, for nothing," said the Pharisee, "I know ye not, and when the time cometh when thy thirst be as my thirst, I will return ye good sympathy for the evil sympathy thou wouldst impose upon me. Out upon thee, thou dog of a Sadusee! I'll have none of thee nor of thy pity."

Thus the line was sharply and clearly drawn between the tents of the Pharisees and the tribes of the Sadusees.

The Pharisee having nothing else to put on took to himself great airs. He learned to write and become a scribe. He thus learned all the secrets of those who employed him to write billy dues and belle's lettres. By dint of writing for pay and by blackmailing, he waxed fat, and took to Law, and waxed fatter. Then it was that the Publican and Sinner learned to look up to him. Foreclosing of mortgages became rife with him, and Sadusees became sadder-u-see than ever. Thus the gulf became wider every day between the camp of the Sadusee and the hut of the Pharisee. The Sadusee became poorer and poorer until the ashes of his former greatness was about all he had to decorate his sack-cloth with and powder his hair with. A warp of burlap and a woof of ashes makes a poetical and touching mourning attire, and became very popular because of its fitness and its economical status. Only queens

could use Merry Widow hats and eree garments, and they were now in the mode of modern bathing suits. The Sadusees were a kind of a melancholy Friar with a penchant for frying fish and putting other people in a stew. Their first monastery was a place where each one kept to his cell and spoke in monosyllables to himself. They were very quiet while there were more cells than monks, but when the monks outnumbered and out-voted the cells in the precincts, there was trouble and throat-cutting became an adjunct to peacefulness, and still is. Then the brother celibates elected a Father, who hired out the cells to the brothers, and instituted the Mendicant Order to beg the rent from Somebody, of Somewhere — I-Don't-Give-a-Damn-Where. Convent-nal and conventional fathers have blessed a part of the earth and cursed the other part ever since. They are supposed to be fathers only in name, but—bell, dell, cell, fell, hell,—that's a plenty. I'll stop off right here.

The Pharisees fared somewhat better and invented the preceding orders, and orders just what he wishes, whom he wishes and just what how he wishes—and gets it.

The Pharisees then set up the See of Rome, and have made Rome howl and other places wail. The Pope is fair-I-see, but you pay the fare or you don't see—See?

France, the eldest daughter of the church, renounced her Papal dad, and the Pope almost became a Sad-u-see, and he'll see more of it.

By invoking the parsonic aid of the Chaplain of the Blade, I got inspiration enough to make this historical research into the dead embers of the forgotten past; and as the Chaplain blowed hot or cold, I got a sparkling of the illumined truth, and here she is. I congratulate myself that the history of the Pharisees and the Sadusees have never had the justice due them that I have inflicted upon them. (Great applause) and rendition by Angelic host—"My Wife's Gone to the Country. Hurrah! Hurrah!"

Arlington, Md.

OLD GHOSTS IN A NEW COSTUME.

(By Warren S. Dean.)

Sometimes a new feature on old things will have a tendency to put us to thinking and then we make an effort to estimate the true worth the new feature has put on the old being. Or, in other words, to find out if the original being is "deserving" of the expense and work the new feature entails on people to uphold.

Take for instance, the new feature the

clergy has proposed in the shape of "Bible Study Clubs." Perhaps that advice given to others may be the means of doing far more than the clergy intended it to do; that is, to "read the bible in truth for what it actually is," and "what it has done for truth and progressive thought for this world's good." Maybe the free advice granted others will be much the same as the advice of a kindly school teacher was to the writer. About 35 years ago, when he was working out as a farm hand, trying in his small way to help better the conditions for others, he was presented with a bible from his old teacher, and on the fly-leaf she wrote the words, "Read and Obey." Before that he had read the bible, but not in the light of a holy, divinely-inspired book," but simply to learn the habits and ways of people in old historical times. But thinking of the present and the advice given, he concluded to give more careful thought and study than when he was simply reading the bible for old history sake. But when we began to read and realize what ways those god-anointed people had, what they were commanded to do by a so-called just and loving god, his respect for that god took a drop, and the system that has been the means of keeping that god before the people, has dropped still lower. So, in fact, it may not be the new feature that will attract the greatest attention, for more likely to thoughtful people it will be: What is the true worth to this world of the original being togged out in a new dress reform?

And that brings to mind the news item that has gone the rounds of the press, how some few divines scolded the fair sex for coming to church arrayed in their new hats and finery. They seemed to be greatly concerned that the display might turn the minds and heads of the male members away from their own sanctimonious bible show.

But we will venture to say as our candid opinion that there was more true worth for this world's goods under that finery than possibly could be found in many of the characters that have gone to make up the Christian bible, from the dreams of the so-called inspired writers of ancient times.

"Read and Obey," says the clergy. Armed with the finest gift of speech that can be made, they ask their dear flocks not to investigate, for it is a great sin to do so, but accept their statement in full. It seems to be natural and pleasing to the human ear to listen to harmonious sounds, and the eye to search for the beautiful, so when we are asked to obey, we will make an earnest effort to find out if that command is in harmony with truth, reason and justice, or simply a new dress reform for the slavish, brutal ignorance of past ages. Delhi, N. Y.

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OFF FOR THE CONVENTION.

By the time this issue of the Blade reaches its readers, the St. Louis Convention will be in progress and we venture to express a most fervent hope that the fruition of months of patient labor will be the successful organization of a new national association of Freethinkers for purely Freethought advocacy.

In our last previous issue mention was made of the interest manifested in this organization by the public press, and while great care and caution was exercised in the subject matter given for publication, once in the hands of newspaper correspondents who were unable to grasp either the scope of the work, or the objects desired, presented a confused mass of ideas surrounded by considerable personal speculation drawn from a too imperfect imagination. The result has an undesired publicity in some respects and rather too much of a good thing in other directions. Personal experience in such matters ought to have served as a gentle reminder of the extravagances of newspaper reporters, but an ardent desire to cover as wide a field for this publicity as possible, led to an unfolding of our plans. Still the publication may do good, as a whole, by bringing the prospective organization to the notice of thousands whom the Blade, and other Freethought papers, would be unable to reach. Our principal regret is the personal allusions made to the Blade's editor, the outgrowth

of a long personal friendship and a desire to make the notices complimentary.

Among the larger newspapers, coming to our knowledge, that have given extensive notices of our convention, are the Cincinnati Enquirer, the Louisville Courier-Journal, Louisville Herald, Memphis Commercial-Appeal, and other papers, including the Leader, Gazette, and Herald, three dailies published in Lexington. Other correspondents are writing for further information. These are good signs. They point a growing freedom of the press and an indifference to the claims and demands of orthodoxy. The adoption of a sound working basis for the new organization, and a practical business management, will insure equal publicity after the organization becomes a fact, when it will be more needed, and far more desirable, as directing public attention to our work.

From another report given by the Editor, printed elsewhere in this issue, it will be seen that we are en-route to the place of meeting. All has been said that can be said before the meeting actually takes place. In our next subsequent issue we hope to have a full report of the Convention with its proceedings.

As these are the last lines we are permitted to write before the Convention is held, we once more express the hope that it will be made a representative body, resolved upon work of practical good, and that once it is launched, every element claiming to be liberal, will rally to its support.

Once born, it must not, shall not die.

Rally round the banner of mental freedom. Its bearers are fighting the good fight. We have too long sailed over pathless oceans in quest of golden shores, but with a well defined purpose brought forth by organization, we are given both chart and log book to guide and direct. Science attains truth. Let us crystallize every germ of truth and carry it with pride among our fellows.

FREE THE SCHOOL AND LIBRARY.

There are two exceedingly important lines of work which the new national organization can take up as a part of its propaganda, which have for their object a greater freedom in all educational activities, so far as ecclesiasticism is concerned.

It has long been a recognized fact that too great an influence has been accorded the church, and its paid advocates, upon our public schools. Innumerable instances are recorded and discussed, wherein preachers have been granted full liberty to prescribe the course of studies, and even act as a sort of supervisor over the daily routine of work. The mistaken notion prevailed, and to some extent still prevails, that ministers are among the best educated of men, and from this impression came the practice of calling upon the local preacher for advice and suggestion in educational matters, much as a regular medical practitioner used to call in a consulting physician to assist in diagnosis a patient's malady. Under such conditions we

can readily understand how religious instruction came to be tolerated in the public schools. Bible reading, recitals of prayers, chapel exercises, hymn singing, and even lengthy sermons, became a part of the school exercises without protest, looked upon as a matter of public duty, and children were liberally dosed with theology in order to more easily proselyte them at a time when they could be figured upon to become paying members of some superstitious sect.

There is still another public institution where the influence of paid preachers has been used with equally serious effect—namely, the public libraries. In many states, where a free public circulating library exists in any of the cities, statutory provisions are made for its maintenance and support by liberal appropriations from the public funds and public sources of revenue. The library is in fact, a public institution. And yet, in far too many cases, preachers have been appointed members of the boards of trustees, given a discriminating power and authority in the selection of books, and this has been used with serious effect upon the character and quality of the literature circulated by these libraries. In all such cases the preacher trustee has not failed, or neglected, to use the authority given him in such a direction as to keep out of the library all books he did not want or did not like, and to purchase such books only as would be calculated to subserve the interests of the Christian church, and complete the work begun in the public schools. This latter condition is as great an educational evil as the former, and equally as disastrous to intellectual freedom in its results.

Perfect intellectual freedom cannot exist, nor can an individual choice be freely made, while ecclesiasticism is permitted to retain control, or exercise influence, upon the public schools and libraries. History will show that such control and influence have never been used for the public good. Self-interest has always played too prominent a part. Granted permission to think for themselves, and uninfluenced by superstition in the days of their childhood, the people would decline to accept the doctrines of orthodox Christianity, and this fact being patent to the clergy, the little public authority conceded to them by well meaning, but ill-judging, officials, has been used to bolster up a dying creed instead of being employed for the public good.

Then, in the light of these well known facts, the Blade would urge upon the coming convention the adoption of some provision among its propagandic policy, aiming to secure a greater liberality and a more perfect secular freedom for the institutions herein discussed. The larger and more important of the educational institutions of the country have broken theological restraints and sanctions. The smaller of such institutions are still, in a measure, fettered by clerical influences. Let the new organization undertake, as a part of its work, a campaign of education for the creation of a healthy public sentiment to the end that all schools and libraries that are essentially of a public character be freed from priestly control. Let the

fight be against the office, not the man. Principles, not persons, be made the objective of our labors.

Here is a field for work in which success will mean more for the generations to come than we can now discern. Our work should be along such lines as will induce a course of instruction in the public schools that will properly fit the children to meet the actualities of life, based on natural science and reason and experience, instead of fictions fostered by theology.

GOD-WORSHIP.

Within the memory of many now living god was an actual personality. Being made in the image of man, many attributed to him the personality of a human being, but endowed him with a series of super-human attributes. These attributes were for both good and evil. The good, it was believed, could be secured by prayers of praise, the evil avoided by prayers of flattery and supplication. The god thus worshipped was regarded a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering personality and the fruitage of these prayers were actually believed to be objective.

Such a belief may be regarded as the natural and inevitable outgrowth of man's mental babyhood. The mystery of natural phenomena could be explained in no other way. In this manner every race and every nation, independent of each other, had their own mythological account of a supposed creation and each, in turn, invented for itself a god. Around this invention monstrous absurdities were built. Form and ceremony followed through which the cunning and crafty reaped large profits from the ignorant and credulous. In the course of time only did the character of these gods undergo a change, but the priestly cult remained to trade upon the fears and superstitions of ignorance.

As advancing intelligence began to exercise any influence upon the wondering human mind, many of these gods disappeared, but they were supplanted by other gods, of newer design, perhaps, but retaining many of the characteristics of the gods that had been discarded. It was quite handy and convenient to change from one god to another. No man ever yet undertook to worship a god unless he believed, or fancied he believed, he could make his god an object of practical utility. Prayers still ascend to the throne of grace. Failure to get an answer wrought further doubts and the creature began to seriously question the creator. Gods were born, used, discarded, left to perish for lack of believers, changed for other gods, until multitudes of gods came across the horizon of faith. The most hideous conception of god that ever was invented is reflected in the god of the bible, born in the brain of semi-savages, endowed with barbaric attributes and unspeakable cruelties. He was and is the last of all personal gods that have emanated from the brain of man. But a few years ago he was earnestly believed in, worshipped by fear, adored by self-interest. He is but a name today, save with

the ignorant few. He will be but a memory in the exceeding near future.

Many Christians now profess an adoration for the god of nature, or nature's god. This is just as mystical a conception as any other god must be. During the French revolution both reason and liberty were deified, which was one of the mistakes of that day. Reason must be used, not worshipped. Enjoy liberty, but do not deify it. Reason becomes dynamic to the extent only that we use it. At best liberty can be no more than a mere condition. Freethought can have no possible use for deities. Freethought is the great giant of intellect, a tidal wave of progress. It must be capable of both giving and receiving the treasures of human thought. By it and through it the last concept of god, the god of nature, must follow all the gods that have preceded it into the realm from which there is no returning. Man does not need god.

We believe it was Mathew Arnold, a capable critic and commentator, who suggested that religion was simply morality touched by emotion, and yet in this, religion being the child of emotion, we may see the origin of the so-called god-idea. Without human emotion god would never have been. With human reason the god's disappear. When god-worship ceases to be, man will, and must, be made the object of man's devotion. When this time comes the might and wonder of the universe will jewel each fleeting hour, and humanity will become the great, shining spot in the infinite palace of nature.

THE BIGGEST THINGS IN HISTORY.

Should the question be put to one of our public school children, what constituted the biggest events in history, the answer in a majority of cases would be a reference to some mighty war, some great battle in which large members of men on both sides lost their lives.

In any event, whether such an answer be given or not, it is none the less a fact that the written record of the world's wars present some of the most striking pictures to the mind of childhood, and make the strongest mental impressions.

Carrying the experiment still further we would find that with a large number of men and women, conceded to be of mature mind, similar mental attitudes would prevail and things that are really the most trivial and fleeting, sometimes barren of results, are more distinctly remembered.

Battles, unless participation becomes an actual and positive necessity, are but the pastime of fools. In all the great world's history there are exceedingly few wars that were not at all justified, or which resulted, one way or the other, in any material benefit to the race. In some rare cases only has war produced beneficial results, and even among these there are some in which those results could have obtained in another and vastly better way.

The impressions then obtained, as to what constitute the biggest things in history, are the necessary results of a mere partial mental training, a sort of one-sided arrange-

ment in which the inadequate judgment of some incapable individual has been the dominant factor. Public education has far too long been entrusted to incompetent brains. No child can learn more than its teacher is capable of imparting, and if the mental status of tutor be law the mind of the pupil must, as a rule, be kept to the same standard. Only in a few abnormal cases would the scholar rise superior to environment. These have invariably developed into the leaders of the world's best thought.

Aside from the fact that we are the fortunate inheritors of the intellectual wealth of centuries, strong in the power created by giants of thought in all ages, placed upon the summit of an edifice in which untold centuries have been employed in buildings, our intellectual education can hardly be said to be full worthy of the times we live in. While it is not the fault of the individual, it is the fault of the race, collectively. So little attention is yet given to the intellectual elements contributing to progress and happiness, that have created such epochs of gigantic mental energy that they stand out sublime in their strength, constituting the very biggest of all things in human history. And yet men can scarce be blamed. Historians, as a rule, simply record the great physical conflicts between men, ignoring the mental engines of progress. While it would be a huge undertaking to chronicle all the events of intellectual change and improvement, the mode and manner of their operation and results, future generations will learn to judge the march of any particular century by its men and not by its machines. Every decisive improvement in mentality has wrought some decisive victory. Every addition to the means of intellectual culture and refinement has been the means of some extraordinary harvest.

True architecture does not consist in the mere building of a structure, nor does true science consist in the accumulation of heterogeneous facts. True science means the detection and assimilation of the principles which correlate facts and of that order which binds the parts into a whole. So the development of true science, is after all, and must be, the biggest thing in all history. This development could not take place all at once. Innumerable tiny streams were pouring constantly into the whole and each point of contact brought to the general fund of scientific knowledge a new fact, and each new fact were, and are, the biggest things in history. In these may be found a record of the steps by which man in his pursuit rises through classifications, the last always being more complex than its predecessors, but all pointing to great oneness of the universe.

When the Freethought elements of the world can be brought into sufficient unity, a unity of purpose and rich endeavor, they will be strong enough to produce vast changes in our present methods of imparting knowledge, that the really great accomplishments of the race will be given precedence and prominence. A complete revision of school books will be necessary to produce this change. It may not be done in our day, but we can, at least lay the foundation and point future workers the way to success.

National Organization of American Freethinkers

OFFICIAL CALL FOR CONVENTION

In the name of and by the authority of the persons whose names are hereunto affixed, Freethinkers of the United States of America, who, having in writing duly expressed themselves as being in favor of a new, national organization that shall undertake and maintain a systematic and advised propaganda of Freethought principles, all persons who hold and believe that the doctrines, theories and teachings of the orthodox Christian church regarding the universe and the origin and destiny of mankind are erroneous, and who believe that happiness and morality can be better subserved by a study and observance of Natural Law than through the medium of prayer, faith or god-worship; who reject all phases and forms of superstition and idolatry; who are free and who desire to be free from orthodox religious restraints in matters affecting human action and conscience; who believe in a full and complete separation of church and state, with all that such separation implies, are hereby called to meet in National Convention in the City of St. Louis, State of Missouri, on Sunday, November 14th, 1909, at the hour of 9 o'clock a. m., for the purpose of devising and adopting a declaration of principles as a basis for such organization; a constitution and by-laws for its proper and effective management and its better government; to elect officers; to outline and adopt a system of propaganda, and to do all other acts and things that may or shall be pertinent to and shall best subserve and aid in the accomplishment of the objects and purposes herein expressed.

Hotel Accommodations.

Arrangements have been made and completed with the management of the LaClede Hotel, at Sixth and Chestnut streets, in the City of St. Louis, for the accommodation and entertainment of all Freethinkers attending the convention, at fairly reasonable rates. This hotel is conducted on the European plan and provides sleeping accommodations only. There is a well appointed restaurant in connection with the hotel at which good meals can be had for small cost. The hotel rooms vary in price, and range from 50 cents to \$1.00 per day, according to quality of room or whether two occupy the same room. The cost of meals will run from 20 cents up. The hotel is large and commodious. It has ample facilities for the accommodation of all who wish to attend, and is situated in the heart of the business district.

Business and Social.

Owing to the great distance that some of those attending the convention will have to travel, and recognizing the natural desire for sufficient social intercourse during the convention, that such a gathering must create, there will be an informal social and business gathering of the Freethinkers attending the convention, and those residing in St. Louis and vicinity, in the parlors of the LaClede Hotel, on the Saturday night, after supper, preceding the Sunday of the convention. This will afford an opportunity for renewing old friendships and forming new ones.

In order to facilitate the business of the convention there will also be an informal caucus to prepare an outline of the work of the convention, select and appoint the several committees, name a temporary chairman and secretary, in order to facilitate the business of the convention and assist in the speedy dispatch of its business.

The caucus will first designate a temporary chairman and secretary; given due authority, the temporary chairman will thereupon appoint the following committees:

On order of business; on organization; on constitution and by-laws; on membership and finance; on propaganda.

The committees will be asked to meet Saturday night or early Sunday morning that their several reports may be ready for submission when the convention is properly called to order.

The Convention.

The Convention proper will be called to order promptly at 9 o'clock on the morning of Sunday, November 14th, 1909, by the temporary chairman who shall be designated by the Saturday night caucus. Such sessions as may be deemed necessary shall be held throughout the day. The Convention Hall is situated at ELEVENTH AND LOCUST STREETS.

Organized Societies.

All organized Freethought societies, national, state, or local, now actively engaged in the dissemination of admitted Freethought principles, are invited and requested to send, or to cause to be sent, any number of delegates or representatives to this Convention, in order that the gathering may be made as universally expressive of American Freethought as it is possible to be. All individual Freethinkers will receive a hearty and cordial welcome.

Charter Members.

All persons, Freethinkers, adopting the declaration of principles, the constitution and by-laws of the organization, and who shall attend the convention in person, and all persons signifying their approval, acceptance and adoption of the same, in writing, addressed to the Secretary, within a time to be specified by the convention, and all those whose names are appended to this call, shall be deemed and recorded on the books of the organization as charter members thereof.

General Invitation.

Extending a fraternal call, a fraternal invitation, and a fraternal welcome to all who love mankind better than fancied gods, who believe in the worship of work, and who desire to unite and co-operate with us in the work of disseminating the high and eternal principles of truth as expressed by Freethought, we are,

John R. Charlesworth, Lexington, Ky.; Parker H. Sercombe, Chicago, Ill.; Dr. T. J. Bowles, Muncie, Ind.; Helen M. Lucas, Marietta, Ohio; William C. Cope, St. Louis, Mo.; Josephine K. Henry, Versailles, Ky.; T. C. Jefferies, Cleveland, Ohio; Julia C. Coon, Bartow, Fla.; J. C. Watkins, Kanawha Falls, W. Va.; E. D. Northrup, Ellieottville, N. Y.; George O. Roberts, Dennison, Ohio; D. W. Sanders, Covington, Ind.; J. Atwood Culbertson, Pittsburg, Pa.; Carl Baerwalde, Cleveland, Ohio; Charles F. Randall, Cherokee, Okla.; J. M. Reed, Chicago, Ill.; J. M. Frost, Tampa, Fla.; Wm. J. Howerton, Tularosa, Texas; James S. Davis, Waynesfield, Ohio; James O'Neal, Ft. Smith, Ark.; E. A. Fitch, Wilmington, Vt.; R. G. Earle, Pine Grove, Ark.; Ella P. Hunt, Moline, Kan.; Emily C. Jones, East Lynne, Mo.; Anna O. Jones, East Lynne, Mo.; Mrs. Nels Johnson, Higgins, Texas; W. L. Luce, Annapolis, Md.; M. H. Oberholtzer, Los Angeles, Cal.; Miss Elizabeth Wiley, St. Louis, Mo.; Andrew Jackson Boyer, Washington, D. C.; E. G. Nichols, Norge, Va.; Joel M. Berry, Nat. Mil. Home, Ohio; Harold Banning, Mt. Vernon, Ohio; Charles G. Brown, Ithaca, N. Y.; H. M. Fisk, Pella, Iowa; A. J. Carson, Ardmore, Okla.; George C. Bartlett, Tolland, Conn.; Moragu Wamsley, Cincinnati, Ohio; Osear A. Janicke, Louisville, Ky.; W. A. Cooper, Milo, Me.; Manly A. Brigham, Rumford, Me.

ABOUT LOVING GOD.

God Manufacturers, as a Rule, Do Not Give Them Good Dispositions.

(By John F. Clarke.)

We hear a great deal about reciprocal amatory relations between God and Man. Some fellows say they love God because God loves them.

This is a kind of close communism that sports bug-house fancies. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," etc. If He gave his son, the son should be still given, but instead, they tell us that it was a kind of April-fool gift and God got the son back again.

He only loved the world enough to lend his son three days for our salvation. Love is a funny thing, and to say that one loves is to give very little insight into a thing.

God is another funny thing. No two persons have exactly the same conception of God. To love something that has to be conjured up before the mind's eye is a feat in love-matrics that is beyond the pale of sound sense. Crazy people love ideals—absolute ideals. Loving tangible things is natural, but lavishing affection upon suggestive shadows is foolish.

The capacity to love is limited, and the fund of affection also, so that when a man draws heavily upon his store of love and then throws it to the gods or the dogs, he is short in his fraternal feelings with his fellow man.

There is no use in wasting good love upon a god, especially upon one that does not exist in fact. Why impoverish one's love capacity for a god fad. In fact, Fad would have been as good a word to represent a figment as God is.

When one marries a Christian, the fact that the spouse loves God and Christ first and the mate only in a secondary degree, accounts for the failure of the Christian marriage.

The Christians assert that without God there is no marriage, but facts show that with God there is a good chance for a divorce. The purported history of God as related by the purported friends of God, does not flatter him. The ideal set forth in sacred history is not calculated to charm the critical reader. Except when baffled by the iron chariots, God rode rough-shod over men and women, who were as good as God's friends. He made war upon women and children,—therefore he was no gentleman. He must have been a Neuter, for he showed no sex any chivalry. He was IT. Hereafter I shall call God IT.

The whole theme of the Israelite religion was "Love me, love my God." The common paraphrase, "Love me, love my dog," is more than synonymous. Man is said to have been "wonderfully and fearfully made," but God seems not to have

been more wonderfully than carefully made.

The disposition given God by It's manufacturers is not lovable, and we have nothing else to go by. The God of the Scriptures makes a better target to throw hatred at, than to pile love upon. All love wasted upon God is at the expense of man. Arlington, Md.

CONSTRUCTION FOR DESTRUCTION

(By John F. Clark.)

A man there was and chose a mate;
A man and woman there was, elate,
He was strong as the sturdy tree
And, sweetly, she, the clinging vine,
Two voices as one; song flowing free
In a melody, all divine.

She leaned upon his trustful care,
He loved her sweet mind, so rare.
Their loves, two tender rills, unite,
And to the gulf of Love do flow,
And all the singing birds inrite
And all their pipes to sweetly blow.

But Spite was out to spoil Love's plan,
God and deceitful angel elan
Death snatched the bride far away
And left an aching, aching heart
And God's fell plight fell with full sway—
Malice hurled the killing dart.

Neighbors said: "Say: 'God's will be done;'"

"Not I," said the bereaved man.
"Be undone, if feeling Thou hast,
By miracle, or might or ban;
Undo, undo, this blighting blast!"

He asked for bread and got a rock
As hard as any black devil's mock;
Then in him rose this thought sublime:
"You took from me and will not give
You have yours, and I have mine;
Her memory will with me love."

"You man your tens of thousands slay;
You may hurl the whole world away;
To me you never can gain say
Her tender words that fill mine ear,
No prank that you can ever play
Can change my love, nor make me fear."
Arlington, Md.

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Nov. 7.—Christ Krishna and Christ Jesus compared. Chap. XXVII.

Nov. 14.—Christ Buddha and Christ Jesus Compared.—Chat. XXIX. to page 295.

Nov. 21.—Christ Buddha and Christ

Jesus Compared. Chap. XXIX. from page 295 to page 305.

Nov. 28.—The Eucharist or Lord's Supper. Chapt. XXX.

PROF. A. J. CLANSEN,
National Organizer,
St. Ansgar, Iowa.

NEW SOCIETY IN PITTSBURG.

Through J. Atwood Culbertson, one of the Blade contributors, plans are now being formed for a new local Freethought Society, in Pittsburg, Pa. Some years ago Pittsburg had a good, strong Secular Society, and it was one of the favorite stopping places of the Blade's Editor when he was on the lecture platform years ago. The very first trip we undertook in America, in 1891, Pittsburg was the first stopping place on the list. We are glad there is to be an awakening. Mr. Culbertson now writes:

"I would like to get in touch with some of the Freethinkers in the Pittsburg district, and would be pleased to have you mention the fact in the Blade. 'Phone me during business hours Grant 2400—139; evenings, Sewickley 9066-J. After the St. Louis convention I think we should be able to get a club started here. Or is there one? Have never heard of one. Fraternally,
1013 Penn Ave. J. A. CULBERTSON.

ROME.

(By the Chaplain.)

Despised by honest men for crimes untold,
You still continue to enslave and hold
Within thy vice-like grip the minds of men
Who fear anathema of thy voice and pen.

Thy breath is noxious with the fumes from hell
For thou art rotten, Rome, with fumes that smell.

Of all the poisonous things on this great earth—
'Twas viper, cobra seed that gave you birth.

In Full Sympathy.

CHATTANOOGA, TENN.—I am still living in Chattanooga, and think all the world of your paper—the Blade. I think you have some brilliant writers on your staff. I am in full sympathy with your plan of organization, and hope you will meet with success in St. Louis on Nov. 14. I am going to try to get your Editor, John R. Charlesworth, or somebody else, who is a good Freethinker, to come here some time in the future and give a good lecture. There are quite a good many Freethinkers in and around Chattanooga, although it is chock-full of churches of all denominations.—ARTHUR STONE.

The Blade's Correspondence

ORGANIZATION WINNING MANY

Dr. Foote Sends Donation to Help Along with Expenses.—Other Letters on the St. Louis Convention.

Sends a Good Representative.

NEW YORK.—I learn from your "News" of the coming convention in St. Louis, and I suppose the officers are not yet selected. I shall not be able to attend but want to send a substitute or representative, and will at least help to make the wheels go round. As I know no better way, I send a check herewith, made payable to you, and you can have it apply on the general expense account of the affair. Yours very truly.—E. B. FOOTE.

(The check which Dr. Foote sent is for \$10.00. Ed.)

Will Attend Convention.

CHICAGO, ILL.—I observe with some regret that your contributors seem hysterical lest the memory of Payne and Ingersoll be obliterated. They are immortal; slander cannot reach them, but it can exhibit its malice and other devilish qualities by monopolistic laws. The church is today seeking to have the Constitution amended so that the Bible can be forced into the schools, and such men as Judge Grosseup, President Taft and other statesmen are in favor of that move, probably for the sake of votes. If it is at all possible, I will attend your St. Louis meeting Nov. 14, and think I can go down Saturday night and come back Sunday night. If you organize, I would like to see a big, broad proposition instead of a narrow one, and I look to you and others to see that such is the product of your efforts. Yours truly.—CHARLES McCORMICK.

Will Help the Cause.

TAMPA, FLA.—I note the call for the St. Louis Convention. I profoundly regret that my age and the distance will preclude the possibility of my attendance, but I want to assure the good and brave men and women who assemble there that I am with them for the great struggle. I will become a member, and will contribute the last cent I can to maintain an efficient lectureship. Good cheer to all and may unborn generations be grateful for all of our toil. Sincerely.—J. M. FROST.

Wants to Be a Member.

CIRCLEVILLE, O.—Put my name down to your new National Organization, as I have been a worker and member of Freethought for years. I am not well, and can not attend the convention, but I will be there in thought and spirit. I hope this will be the grandest time of your life. Accept my best wishes for its success. Yours fraternally.—ESTHER VAN RIPER, M.D.

Must Be Charter Member.

KANSAS CITY, MO.—Your plan for a National Organization of Freethinkers looks good to me, and as I can't be in St. Louis, I am writing you in order that I may get in as a charter member, if possible. Mr. Charles Arlund, 2633 Madison avenue, Kansas City, Mo., asks me to solicit the same honors for him. If there is any fee kindly notify us. I have other friends in sympathy with the cause, to whom it might be well to send a copy of the Blade, or circulars pertaining to organization, namely: M. A. Stearnes, A. Ward, John Starkweather and Dr. Shepherd, all of Meadville, Mo. Also, Verne Reece, Slater, Mo. Sorry I can't give you more names from Kansas City, but my acquaintance here is very limited. With best wishes for the convention and your success.—L. H. REECE.

Two More Members.

LOUISVILLE, KY.—Myself and wife intend to go to St. Louis to attend the Freethought convention. We are not members of any Freethought society, but would like to become a member of such, so you can count on us as charter members at St. Louis. Keep up the good work. I work with about 600 men in a shop, and talk Freethought every chance I get. I engage in some hot arguments, but always come out without a scratch.—GEO. MUNZ.

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